

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 – 12 are presented for reconsideration and further examination in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks. Claims 13 – 15 have been withdrawn without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,193,172 to Kanzaka (hereinafter referred to as “the Kanzaka ‘172 patent”).

By this Response and Amendment, the Abstract and claims 1 and 11 have been amended to correct informalities; and claim 1 has been amended to recite that spacers are “formed on a first sidewall of the recess,” to recite “at least one projection formed on a second sidewall of the recess, said second sidewall being opposite to the first sidewall,” and to further recite “wherein said spacers facilitate rigidity of the recess and the arrangement being such that when said sheet member is advanced inwardly into said groove it is slidably received therein and said projection is pressed out of the groove until the opening is aligned with the projection to allow snap-fitting of the projection into said opening, thereby providing a secure coupling between the sheet member and the receiving member;” and the rejections to the claims as amended are traversed.

Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found in at page 5, lines 13 – 30 of the originally filed application. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the above amendments do not introduce any new matter to this application within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §132.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1 – 12 as being clearly anticipated by the Kanzaka ‘172 patent.

Response

By this Response and Amendment, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection since the Kanzaka '172 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the features of the presently claimed invention. For a reference to anticipate an invention, all of the elements of that invention must be present in the reference. The test for anticipation under section 102 is whether each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987); MPEP §2131.

Independent claim 1 recites: “[a] coupling between a sheet member with an edge of a thickness T, having at least one opening formed adjacent said edge, and between a receiving member formed with a recess of a width W and spacers formed on a first sidewall of the recess, said spacers defining within said recess a groove of a width w, wherein said thickness T, said width W and said width w meet the condition $T < w < W$, said recess comprising also at least one projection formed on a second sidewall of the recess, said second sidewall being opposite to the first sidewall, said projection protruding into said groove, wherein said spacers facilitate rigidity of the recess and the arrangement being such that when said sheet member is advanced inwardly into said groove it is slidably received therein and said projection is pressed out of the groove until the opening is aligned with the projection to allow snap-fitting of the projection into said opening, thereby providing a secure coupling between the sheet member and the receiving member.”

The Kanzaka '172 patent discloses an ornamental attachment for being mounted on a slider pull tab for a slide fastener. The attachment has a body having a pair of upper and lower plates between which is defined a channel for receiving the slider pull tab. There is a means in the channel for locking the pull tab upon full insertion into the channel.

In contrast to the presently claimed invention, the Kanzaka '172 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest that "said thickness T, said width W and said width w meet the condition $T < w < W$ " as recited in amended independent claim 1. In the presently claimed invention the thickness T of the edge of a sheet member is deliberately less than the width of the recess. Contrastingly, in the Kanzaka '172 patent, the channel 19 (which, for the sake of argument, is understood as similar to the recess as claimed in the present application) has a width W, which "has a height H and a width W that substantially correspond to the thickness T and the maximum width Wm of the pull tab...", see *The Kanzaka '172 Patent* at col. 2, lines 52 – 55. Thus, for at least the reason that "said thickness T, said width W and said width w meet the condition $T < w < W$ " is not disclosed, taught or suggested by the Kanzaka '172 patent, the Kanzaka '172 patent does not anticipate the presently claimed invention.

In further contrast to the presently claimed invention, the Kanzaka '172 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest "spacers formed on a first sidewall of the recess... [and] at least one projection formed on a second sidewall of the recess, said second sidewall being opposite to the first sidewall" as recited in amended independent claim 1. In the presently claimed invention, the spacers are formed on a sidewall of the recess that is opposite the sidewall of the recess having a projection. Contrastingly, however, in the Kanzaka '172 patent, the lands 35, 36 (which, are identified in the Office Action as equivalent to the spacers of the presently claimed invention) are formed on one sidewall of the channel 19, while land 32 is formed on the opposite sidewall of the channel, where the projection 26 is located. Thus the spacers are formed on both sidewalls and the projection is thus on the same sidewall as the spacer.

In yet further contrast to the presently claimed invention, the Kanzaka '172 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest that "said spacers facilitate rigidity of the recess" as recited in amended independent claim 1. In the Kanzaka '172 patent, it is explicitly stated that the portions of the plates 15, 16 which define the channel 19 are relatively flexible. Accordingly, the pull tab can be positionally

stabilized by resilient contact with its wide areas as there are the lands. (Column 3, lines 26 – 45).

Since in the presently claimed invention, the relationship between the edge thickness T , the recess width W and the groove width w is deliberately selected to be $T < w < W$, there is no contact between the sheet member and the recess sidewall after the sheet member is coupled with the receiving member. By virtue of this provision, there is no ongoing pressure between the coupled members; no internal stresses are developed in either of them, therefore causing no danger of disconnection of the coupling as a result of creep or yield associated with one of the members. Contrastingly, in the Kanzaka '172 patent, there is deliberate intimate contact between the coupled members. This contact takes place during the insertion of the tab in the receiving member and after the coupling is accomplished.

For the above reasons, Applicant submits that the presently claimed invention is not anticipated by the Kanzaka '172 patent. Similarly, since dependent claims necessarily contain all of the features of the independent claim from which they depend, Applicant submits that the claims that depend from claim 1 are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as the independent claim. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

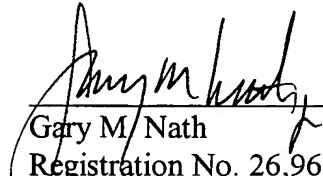
In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 14-0112.

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Respectfully submitted,
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